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ABSTRACT

Two studies were performed to examine the transfer rates of first-time freshmen in the Business Administration (BA) major at a public two-year college to senior colleges or universities in the University System of Georgia (USG). The first study tracked students for 4 years, beginning in fall 1988, and the second study tracked students for 3 years, beginning in fall 1989. Students being tracked were divided into four groups: those who had declared BA as their major, those who had earned a BA associate degree over the 3- and 4-year study periods, and both of the previous groups further limited to those students who had completed 60 or more credit hours at a two-year college and had received a "C" or better in Accounting, Microeconomics, and Macroeconomics. Results of the study included: (1) transfer rates for BA majors were 37% for the 3-year study and 38% for the 4-year study; (2) within 3 years of starting at a two-year college, over 70% of BA majors with associate degrees had transferred to an institution in the USG, compared with 82% after 4 years; (3) 60% of BA students who had completed 60 or more units and had received a "C" or better in Accounting, Microeconomics, and Macroeconomics transferred after 3 years, and 68% had transferred after 4 years; and (4) BA graduates with a "C" or better average in their major classes reached a 4-year transfer rate of 87%. (Contains 14 references.) (MAB)

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TRANSFER RATES OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION MAJORS AT A TWO-YEAR COLLEGE

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Transfer Rates of Business Administration Majors at a Two-Year College

ABSTRACT

This paper examines the transfer rates of first-time freshmen business administration majors at a public two-year college to senior colleges or universities within the University System of Georgia. A three-year study followed students who entered college for the first-time during the fall of 1989 through to the fall of 1992. A separate study analyzed four-year transfer rates for freshmen students entering during the fall of 1988 through to the fall of 1992. The three-year and four-year transfer rates for business administration majors with associate degrees were 71 percent and 82 percent, respectively. The rates for business administration students with associate degrees improved to 73 percent for the three-year study and 87 percent in the four-year study when these additional criteria were applied: student achieved a 'C' or better in accounting II, macroeconomics, and microeconomics. The data indicate that the majority of business administration students with a significant investment in their major area of concentration transfer to senior colleges and universities within the University System of Georgia within a three or four-year period after entering a two-year college.

INTRODUCTION

During the 1960s and 1970s, few questioned the open access policy at two-year institutions and fewer still demanded accountability with respect to the success of transfer programs and subsequent baccalaureate attainment. During the 1980s, the transfer function came under greater scrutiny, since many came to the conclusion that easy access to higher education could be justified only if it led to genuine achievement of student aspirations. Despite the importance of transfer education as a major component of the two-year college, few institutions can reliably document this function. Consistent data are hard to find, even though such information would serve as an indicator of accountability and a means of self-assessment (Brawer, 1991; Palmer, 1991; Cohen, 1993).

A perfect method for accurately calculating transfer rates does not exist. Data gathered to determine these rates is not all-inclusive and it is time-bound. The method described herein does not fully take into account student aspirations except that those in the study have a self-declared transfer major (i.e. business administration), thus would be expected to transfer. This is consistent with the recommendation of the League for Innovation in the Community College (LICC, 1989). Some students attend full-time, others part-time. Some are older. Some attend mostly at night. Some take different mixes of courses and receive a wide variety of grades for their differing efforts. No attempt was made to differentiate students on every characteristic that might have had some bearing on whether they might transfer within the study period. Furthermore, some students take five years or longer to transfer and not all students who leave a two-year college go to a senior college or university within the University System of Georgia. Some go to private universities or institutions out of the state (Hamilton, 1992).

As is evident from the cohort definition below, the transfer rates indicated in this study are an undercount. Previous studies by the author have determined, however, that the transfer rates calculated by the method used in this study are probably within five to ten percent of the actual transfer rate. An analysis of June 1990 graduates indicated that the average time to complete a degree at two-year college was 2.3 years (Hamilton, 1990b). A five-year longitudinal study of 448 first-time students with

transfer majors who started at two-year college in the fall of 1984 revealed that most of the matriculation to system senior colleges and universities occurred by the second (59%) and third (84%) year (Hamilton, 1990a). This same study indicated that the majority of transfer students (about 70%) transfer to one of three System units: The University of Georgia (29%), North Georgia College (29%), and Georgia State University (12%).

METHOD

General Cohort Definition: First-time freshmen with a self-declared transfer major who started at a two-year college during the fall of 1988 (four-year study) or the fall of 1989 (three-year study). First-time students are those for whom the two-year college is the first college they attended as evidenced by a lack of transfer hours on their transcripts. Each cohort was followed from the fall quarter of entry to senior colleges and universities in the University System of Georgia until the fall of 1992 inclusive. If a student transferred to a baccalaureate-granting institution in the System within the study period they were counted as transfers. Data were obtained by querying the University System of Georgia's massive longitudinal SIRS file which is maintained on the Cyber 960 in Athens by the Regents' Office of Information and Technology.

Transfer Majors and Business Administration Major Cohorts: All first-time freshmen with a self-declared transfer major and those transfer majors with associate degrees were followed in addition to the business administration students. No attempt was made to separate business majors from these students when the study looked at transfer rates.

Business Administration (BA) majors take up to the first two years of their baccalaureate program at a two-year college. The following groups of first-year first-time freshmen BA majors were followed (1) All students declaring BA as their major, (2) BA majors who earned an associate degree over the three- and four-year study periods, (3 and 4) both of the previous groups with this additional criteria - 60 or more academic credit hours at two-year college (does not include institutional credit courses) and a 'C' or better grade in three business courses, Accounting II, Microeconomics, and Macroeconomics. This set of criteria was established such that transfer rates for students who were clearly products of the Business Division of two-year college could be followed. One would expect this group to transfer in relatively high numbers, considering the substantial investment they have made in higher education.

Transfer Rate: The transfer rates given are the number of students who transferred to System baccalaureate-granting institutions divided by the total N in the group followed. Students who transferred to two or more System units over the course of the studies were only counted once. Students who might have transferred to an in-state private institution or to any out-of-state institution were not followed. This consideration coupled with the likelihood that more students would have transferred if the time frame of the study were extended means that the transfer rates given are less than the actual rates. Other studies indicate that the rates given in this study are about a 10% undercount.

Business Administration Majors: Transfer Rates
Three-Year (Fall 89 to Fall 92) and Four-Year Transfer Rates (Fall 88 to Fall 92)

	Three-Year Rate Fall 89 to Fall 92			*Four-Year Rate Fall 88 to Fall 92*			
Group	N	transfers	Transfer Rate	N	transfers	Transfer Rate	
1	180	66	36.7	173	65	37.6	BA majors
2	57	39	68.4	49	37	75.5	BA majors with criteria below
3	52	37	71.2	49	40	81.6	BA majors with associate degrees
4	44	32	72.7	37	32	86.5	BA majors with associate degrees and criteria below
5	617	207	33.6	402	218	54.7	All transfer majors
6	123	90	73.2	137	102	74.5	All transfer majors with associate degrees

BA - Business Administration

Additional criteria for Groups 2 and 4

60 or more academic credits at two-year college with C' or better in Accounting II, Microeconomics, and Macroeconomics.

FINDINGS

The three-year and four-year transfer rates for the cohorts followed are summarized in the accompanying table. If one follows all first-time freshmen business administration majors, the transfer rates are 37% for the three-year study and 38% for the four-year study. Despite the additional year of follow-up for those who started in the fall of 1988, the transfer rate did not increase appreciably.

Transfer rates undergo a substantial increase when the criteria by which one defines the cohorts followed is applied more rigorously. Within three years of starting at two-year college, over 70% of business administration majors with associate degrees had transferred to a unit within the University System of Georgia, and the transfer rate for the four-year study was 82%. These rates were comparable to or better than the same transfer rates for all students with an associate degree.

Business administration majors with 60 or more academic credits at two-year college and a 'C' or better in three Area IV business courses - accounting II, microeconomics, and macroeconomics transferred at a rate of 68% for the three-year study and 76% for the four-year study. Business administration majors with the above criteria, as well as, an associate degree from two-year college reached a four-year transfer rate of 87%. When one examines the transfer rates of those students without an associate degree, but with the additional course criteria listed above, there is only a slight reduction to 68 percent for the three-year study period and 76 percent for the four-year period. Although the definitions used in two-year institution transfer studies vary and suffer from numerous data-gathering problems, the averages reported in the literature for associate degree earners and those that use credit cut-offs who are followed for five or more years seldom exceed 60 percent and in

some cases are substantially less (Preston, 1993; Illinois Community College Board, 1990; Cohen, 1993; Banks, 1993).

The rates for students with a major in business administration compare favorably or are higher than when considering the transfer rates of all majors together. The data indicate that the majority of business administration students with a significant investment in their major area of concentration transfer to senior colleges and universities within the University System of Georgia within a three or four-year period after entering a two-year college.

Determination of program-specific transfer rates provides an analytical tool to gauge the effectiveness of articulation efforts. This serves as a mirror of faculty values, attitudes, and practices which in many ways form a bridge between the two year college and the baccalaureate degree (Richardson, 1993). Data reflecting positively on the transfer role played by two-year colleges helps to counteract the perception that the curricula and environment in community college may not adequately prepare students for transfer (Brint and Karabel, 1989; Thomas, 1988, Voorhees, 1987). Moreover, calculation of rates that take into account goals and course progress are a much better way to assess the transfer function of the two-year college than more simplistic and misleading approaches advocated by Cohen (1993) which seldom yield rates that exceed 25 percent.

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